

be in a position of rejecting this agreement? What are your concerns over nicotine levels?

President Clinton. Well, of course we could. We could be in a position of rejecting it or accepting it; I haven't seen it yet.

I received a letter—I was told that I received a letter after I left to come out here, from Dr. Kessler and Dr. Koop, both of whom, as you know, have worked with me very closely on this issue, asking for a reasonable amount of time for them to evaluate this. And I think that they should evaluate it, and of course I care very deeply about what they say. I have worked with them on a whole range of issues. And we want to see what it says.

The test should be, does it preserve clear and unambiguous jurisdiction for the FDA in important areas, and is the money spent in an appropriate way so that we advance the protection of public health and reduce children smoking? That's it. It's a simple test for me and I—but I can't comment on it because I haven't seen it. And I think that it's the same for them. You would expect them to put up a few little red flags, but we all ought to—these folks have been working hard and they've done their best, and now we should look at it and make our judgments.

Let me say to the American press, while you're here, I want to thank Prime Minister Prodi and the members of his government for the extraordinary leadership that Italy has shown in the Balkans, working with us in Bosnia, being a very effective member of the contact group, providing support for American actions there, without which we would not have been able to proceed, and then, most recently, for really an almost unprecedented effort to lead a multinational force in Albania. I will predict to you that in future years we will look back on this Italian effort and see it as a real watershed in European leadership for promoting security and minimizing disruption. I just wanted to thank him and say that to you, sir.

Prime Minister Prodi. Thank you.

Bosnia and Albania

Q. Mr. Prodi, on Bosnia, do you believe that the multinational force should stay after 1998? Do you have any concerns that fighting will still break out?

Prime Minister Prodi. I have some concerns, but we shall talk about that in our conversation. And of course, the Bosnian situation is very complex and a program to end it in a short time is not easy to solve. But we came here just to talk of this problem.

Q. Thank you.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

President Clinton. I would like to say that it's a great honor for us to have Prime Minister Prodi and the distinguished members of his government here. And I want to also say that the United States is deeply grateful for Italy's leadership in promoting peace in the Balkans, especially the work that we have done together in Bosnia. The United States could not have done its job in Bosnia without the support of Italy.

And I am especially grateful for the leadership that Italy has shown in Albania. It is an almost unprecedented effort to put together a European initiative to minimize the troubles of Albania, which are the kinds of things that we will be dealing with for a long time. And I believe that in years to come, we will look back on the Italian effort here as a dramatic historic breakthrough in the capacity of the European nations to promote peace and deal with difficulties.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:25 p.m. at the Brown Palace Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to David A. Kessler, former Commissioner of Food and Drugs, and C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General.

Statement on the Proposed Tobacco Agreement

June 20, 1997

Less than one year ago, my administration announced an historic rule to protect children

from the harm caused by tobacco products. Two months ago, a court in North Carolina issued

a landmark ruling confirming my decision that the Food and Drug Administration has authority to regulate tobacco products to protect our children's health. These victories for the public health drove the tobacco companies to the bargaining table and extracted concessions from them that would have been unimaginable just a short time ago.

I commend the attorneys general and other people working with them, including children's health leaders, for their hard work in negotiating this agreement in a way that seeks to advance our struggle to protect the health of children against the dangers of tobacco. They deserve our thanks for doing so.

We must now carefully consider whether approving this proposed settlement will protect the public health—and particularly our children's health—to the greatest extent possible. Until now, we have not had the opportunity to review the actual terms of the agreement, and we have

not concluded whether it is in the best interests of the public health. Over the next several weeks, we will undertake a thorough public health review. I am asking Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser—along with Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services—to engage in extensive consultations with the public health community and others to subject this agreement to the strictest scrutiny. They will report to me on whether this agreement represents the best means of protecting the Nation's public health interests.

In the meantime, we will fight as hard as ever to ensure that the FDA rule stands. Each day, 3,000 young people become regular smokers; 1,000 of them will have their lives cut short as a result. Protecting the health of the public and these children will be our measure of this proposed agreement.

Statement on the European Union-United States Mutual Recognition Agreements

June 20, 1997

I am pleased the United States and the European Union have initialed in Denver today landmark agreements that represent a new level of transatlantic cooperation. These accords will reduce trade barriers, increase U.S. exports, and promote more efficient regulation in sectors that account for approximately \$50 billion in two-way trade between the United States and Europe, including telecommunications equipment, information technology, medical devices, and pharmaceuticals.

The Mutual Recognition Agreements will eliminate the need for duplicative testing, inspection, or certification of products destined for trade on each side of the Atlantic, while protecting the health and safety of consumers on both sides of the Atlantic. By their very nature, these accords represent and require the highest level political, economic, and regulatory

cooperation between nations. When implemented, this package will serve to increase U.S. exports by saving manufacturers up to 10 percent of the cost of delivering U.S. exports to Europe and enhance transatlantic cooperation to protect the health and safety of our peoples. This is a good agreement for the American people and is good news for manufacturers, workers, and consumers in the United States and Europe.

I want to thank the TransAtlantic Business Dialogue for its important role in supporting these negotiations. I also want to congratulate Commerce Secretary William Daley, U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, and all the U.S. agencies that showed creativity and persistence in forging agreements that will help shape the transatlantic marketplace.